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THE
MEDICAL ADVOCATE;

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF ADVOCATING

THE THOMSONIAN SYSTEM

OF THE

PRACTICE OF MEDICINE,

ON

BOTANICAL PRINCIPLES.

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THE
MEDICAL ADVOCATE.

VOL. I]

BOSTON, MAY, 1827.

[No. 2.]

LECTURE 1.

ON THE THOMSONIAN SYSTEM OF PRACTICE.

Delivered at Concert Hall, March 21, 1826.

I shall begin with the principles upon which his system is founded—for nothing can stand without a foundation. He says that all animal bodies are formed of the four elements—Earth—Water—Air—and Fire. That Earth and Water compose the solids, and that Air and Fire, or heat—is the cause of life and motion. That all bodies are constituted alike, differing only in temperament—that heat is life, and cold death—and that a state of health depends upon the power that the inward, or vital heat, has in resisting the effect of cold. As to the first principles, of what our bodies are composed, there need be but little said, for it cannot admit of doubt. The other grounds taken, will form the subject of our enquiry; and I shall proceed to give such views and make such explanations, as my own reflections have brought home to my mind as correct.

We will first consider the fountain, or source of heat in the body, which will be found to be the stomach; and that the continuation of it depends upon the food that is digested therein. Of this there can be no doubt—for we all know that heat, or life, cannot con-

tinue long without food—no more than fire can be kept burning without fuel. Food taken into the stomach, and well digested, not only continues the vital heat, but affords nourishment to the body, which is diffused by the power of that heat through the whole system—whereby the whole operations of nature are carried on; and a complete state of health is preserved. It is conclusive then, I should say, that nothing can be introduced into the stomach, that will tend to restore or continue health except such substances as are capable by their digesture, to generate heat, or afford nourishment to the system.

Dr. Darwin says, that “*Food nourishes according to its STIMULATING qualities.*” This agrees perfectly with our view of the subject; and it will be proper for us here to enquire, what is meant by the term *stimulating*? According to what I can learn, it means to generate heat—or, as some define it, to *excite*. And how can an excitement be caused, but by increasing the power of heat? As I view it, to stimulate or excite, is to increase life, or animation, by the power possessed within itself, of whatever is used for that purpose. And here I wish you to take particular notice, for it is very important to the consideration of our subject, of the line of distinction I shall draw, between those substances, that by their being opposed to heat, cause nature thereby to exert itself to overcome such opposition, by which an excitement is produced—and those that possess qualities within themselves to produce it, by being in harmony with nature. I say, without the fear of contradiction, that the first has a tendency to diminish the powers of life—and the latter to increase it. Anger and fear produce excitement; but when it subsides, all will allow that it diminishes the strength.

Opium, calomel, antimony, and even cold, are said to be stimulants; but I should be glad to be shown, what are the nourishing qualities they possess—or the power they have within themselves to generate heat?



If they have none, and I hardly think it will be pretended that they have—I shall put them down, with many other poisonous things used as medicine as detrimental to health and enemies to life. For I shall here lay it down as a truth, that whatever has a tendency to destroy life, cannot be made instrumental in restoring health.

As to the great principle of life, or from whence came that spark, or how it is enkindled in us, is beyond the comprehension of man to know; and it would be of no advantage to him if he did. It is sufficient for us to know that it is so. We have it from Scripture, that God created man out of the dust of the earth; and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. It becomes our duty to make use of all those means, that our reason tells us are best calculated to continue that life, and make it answer all the purposes designed by the Creator.

The stomach being the fountain of heat, or life, is the cause of all motion in the body; and a state of health depends upon the power that vital heat has to keep the determining powers from that to the surface of the body—by which means the operations of nature are carried on, and not only heat and nourishment is carried to all parts, but what is not needed is thrown off through the pores of the skin. Whenever the vital heat is so diminished, from any cause, that it has not the power to produce this effect, the system becomes more or less diseased. This may take place from various causes; but the most common is the exposure to sudden cold, while the digestive powers are weakened, so that the stomach is not able to digest food sufficient to keep up that heat on which our life depends. This is called taking cold—but it would be more correct to call it losing heat, by which the power of cold is increased. There can be little doubt that this is the primary cause of all disease; and if nature is not sufficient to relieve itself, or the proper means are not

made use of to give the necessary relief—becomes a settled disorder; and the longer it is neglected, the more difficult it is to remove the cause.

It is not my intention to give at this time any particular directions for the treatment of disease, any more than what is necessary to convey a general view of the principles upon which the system of practice under consideration are founded; but will here remark, that in the cases just alluded to, the best remedy will be found by shielding the body from the cold air, getting as much external warmth as possible; and at the same time administering such medicine as will increase the inward heat, to produce perspiration and restore the digesture. This can be done by very simple means, if attended to in the first stages of the complaint.

That cold is the cause of disease and death, is as obvious as that the continuance of health and life depend on heat. All creation is so contrived, that every thing has its opposite—By this the grand designs of Providence are carried on; and a proper balance of power is preserved throughout the whole. Virtue is opposed by vice—If this was not the case, man would not be mortal. If it was not for the opposition between heat and cold, there would be no motion—every thing would be silent. By the active power of the vital heat of the body, the cold air by which it is surrounded is kept at sufficient distance to preserve health; for all animal bodies are surrounded by, and sustain a great weight of, atmospheric air; and this being colder than our bodies, causes a constant contention for power between them. A state of health therefore depends upon the power that heat has over cold.

The contest between heat and cold, is manifest in the effects produced on the earth, which by the warmth received from the sun, and the power it has of reflecting back the heat it receives, forms our atmosphere,

in which all animals and vegetables have their existence. All animal bodies by the power of heat they possess, form an atmosphere around them, in proportion to the power of heat they contain, has to resist the cold—and this in cold climates, and especially in the cold seasons, it would not be able to do, if we did not aid it by the use of fire, to warm the atmosphere around us, and cover our bodies with clothing to resist the pressure of the cold air. So the earth—when the sun recedes from us, and its influence is lessened, loses the power of heat, and the cold descends and holds possession, till the returning sun gives it heat sufficient to recover from the effects of cold, by repelling its influence; so that nature recovers its wonted vigour and animation.

It will now be proper, keeping in view the above principles, to make further enquiry into the nature and cause of disease. The cause of disease, as has been before stated, is the effects of cold, or the absence of the power of heat. It will, therefore, follow of course, that heat is the friend, and cold the enemy—that one tends to continue life and the other to produce death. When the vital heat is by any cause diminished, so that it is not capable of resisting the surrounding air, cold shows its effects by causing obstructions over the whole surface of the body, and perspiration ceases.—Nature then rallies itself, and sends out its forces to drive off the enemy; when a contest ensues between the powers of cold and heat. This causes an increase of heat in those parts where the obstruction has taken place; and this effect is what is denominated a Fever; because there is an unusual appearance of heat, which has been taken to be the cause of disease, when it is only the effect. This will account for the practice that has been usually adopted, of making use of those means that are calculated to destroy the heat, and stop the fever, which is Nature—and increase the power of cold. When this is the case, nature retires into its

citadel the Stomach, and there remains, if able to maintain itself, till reinforced by such medicines as are calculated to increase the inward heat, and restore the digestive powers, so that food will invigorate the system by its stimulating and nourishing effects; and give nature the complete controul.

If the indications pointed out by nature were followed on the first appearance of disease, there would be very little difficulty in removing the cause; but when a contrary course is pursued, by making use of those means that strengthen the power of cold, the natural consequence is, that the balance is turned in favour of the disease, and the fever, or disturbed state of the natural heat, subsides for a time, because overpowered by the unnatural means made use of; which have the effect to prolong the termination of the complaint, but not to remove the cause. This stage of the difficulty is what is called a settled fever. The patient has to remain in this situation, if the vital heat is able to continue life, till the tone of the stomach is so far restored as to be able to overpower the pretended remedy, as well as the disease. Thus, what might have been effected in a few hours, had the proper means been used, will take several weeks to accomplish—besides the injury the constitution receives from such unnatural practice. This is undoubtedly the cause of all chronic complaints.

In the foregoing remarks I have spoken more particularly of cases where the whole system is affected; but it will apply with equal force to all wounds, such as scalds, burns, and other external injuries. Whenever any part of the body receives an injury, an obstruction is caused thereby, and perspiration ceases in that part, so that cold takes possession; and the whole system becomes partially affected. In this case there is an increase of heat to remove the obstruction, which causes pain in the part, and will remain till the cold is expelled. To do this the parts must be shielded as

much as possible from the cold air, and warming medicine given to keep up a good degree of circulation. In cases of this kind, Dr. Thomson gives directions, in the first instance, to apply cloths wet with cold water, to be kept constantly wet, as the best means of keeping off the cold, easing the pain, and causing a speedy recovery. This is certainly a very convenient remedy and within the reach of every one; but it must be borne in mind, that it is necessary at the same time to give stimulating medicine to keep up a perspiration. To the salutary effects of this treatment, I can bear witness, by having seen a number of cases where this was faithfully followed; and have never known one instance that it had not the desired effect.

An idea generally prevails, that much benefit is derived from applying to wounds certain healing substances, such as salves, ointments, &c.; but this is founded altogether in error. It cannot be supposed for a moment, by a rational mind, that any thing can be added thereby to the part, which will cause it to heal. The truth is, nature is sufficient for every purpose of restoring itself from all injuries, if proper means are taken to expel the cold, and keep up the power of the vital heat.

All animal bodies are so constituted, that every tendency to restore a diseased part, must proceed from the fountain or source of life, by which the system is invigorated and nourished; and I know of no other source from which life receives its support, but the stomach. Admitting this as a correct principle, and I think it cannot be doubted, it follows of course, that when there is an obstruction in any part of the system, let the cause be what it will, the only means which can be made use of with any chance of success to remove the obstruction, must be applied to the stomach. That is, to follow the indications pointed out by nature, by increasing the power that maintains life; and at the same time guard the part against cold, which is always opposed to it.

In all cases where this course is followed immediately, the healing process commences in a short time, and a cure will be effected with very little pain or inconvenience; but if neglected till cold has gained possession so as to cause canker in the wound, which is always the consequence of cold having gained a supremacy; or where improper applications are made to the part, which cause irritation and produce the same effect, a cure cannot take place till these evils are removed; for the healing process will not commence, so long as there is canker in the wound. In the latter case it becomes necessary to apply to the wounded part such things as will tend to overpower the cold and remove the canker. The best thing that has been found for this purpose, is the ginger poultice, made according to the directions given by Dr. Thomson in his book of practice; putting over it several thicknesses of cloth wet with the canker tea, and kept wet. This should be followed, renewing the poultice every twelve hours, and at the same time giving stimulating medicine to keep up the inward heat, till the healing process commences, which may always be known by the wound discharging ripe matter, or pus.

Much has been published by medical writers about what they call punctured wounds, or such as are caused by some sharp instrument being forced into the flesh, running nails into the feet, &c.; but they differ so much in their opinions upon the subject, that there is very little to be learnt from their writings; for in this as most other subjects, they only "darken council with words without knowledge." It would seem, however, by their writings, that the only cases in which they have been successful, it has been where they adopted the principles upon which our plan is founded.

I shall pursue this important subject at some future time, and endeavour to give a view of the causes

of the alarming symptoms that often follow wounds of this description, with the best mode of treatment, in case they appear or are apprehended, agreeably to our system of practice.

Extract from the Medical Reformer, on the absurdity of medical theory and hypothesis.

There is obviously good sense and sound philosophy in the doctrine of Empiricism. It points out the true mode of investigating the phenomena of nature, by unwearied experiments; the mode which Bacon laboured to inculcate on the Dogmatists, and hypothesis mongers of his age; which Newton successfully pursued, and which hastened the philosophers of latter times to the development of that fund of natural knowledge in the sciences of electricity, chemistry, mechanical, and every branch of natural philosophy by which modern inquiry is distinguished. Compared with this species of investigation, how futile are the speculations, misnamed philosophy in the schools, relative to elements, and essences, which had no existence, except in the imagination of the disputants. For it must be observed, that the ancient Empirics did not disregard the dictates of reason and reflection; they only deprecated the application of them to circumstances out of the reach of the senses, and beyond the scope of experiment. Those mischievous principles and practices, which their successors, or at least those who have subsequently assumed the title, have made the refuge of ignorance and craft, cannot be alleged against them. This is evident from the clear and explicit statement of their tenets, which Celsus has transmitted to us. No longer engaged in studying systems, and averse to speculation, even in regard to the symptoms of diseases, the Empirics exerted their whole faculties in investigating the powers of medicinal substances, which laid the foundation of their pre-eminence in pharmaceutical

skill, and gradually effected those changes in the art of medicine which subsequently occurred. The properties of the productions of nature, especially of the vegetable world, were extensively examined: and the instruments of the physician, by which he could influence the functions of the living body, were greatly multiplied. The ancients introduced sedative and narcotic remedies; on the liberal use of which probably depended the superior reputation acquired by some of them over their more cautious antagonists. Of this superiority, a single instance occurs in the many existing testimonies to the fame of Heroclide of Tarentum, who is recorded as the most successful physician in any age or country in the world. But unfortunate for mankind, the important discoveries made by the Empirics have been lost, and the present age has to lament the want of their remedies.

The candid confession of Dr. Richard Reece, of London, member of the Royal College of Surgeons, author of the "Dictionary of Popular Medicine," "Medical Guide," "Chemical Guide," corresponding member of the Society of Practical Medicine of Paris, &c. &c. &c.

"The charter of the 'Royal College of Physicians,' is found to contain a singular licence, which is, a permission to any one and every one to practise the healing art by the use of *herbs only*. Now we really do consider this as ample a permission as any man would require, for poor must be the resources of that physician's mind, and very narrow his knowledge of medical botany, who could not from the vegetable kingdom alone cure most of the diseases of the human frame; even the specific of mercury, if we were driven to the necessity of a substitute, might probably be rivalled in some of these productions of nature. We know not whether we have most reason to hail the discovery of mercury as a blessing, or regard it as a curse, since the diseases it entails are as numerous as those which it cures. Our best informed dentists declare that they can clearly witness the progress of the use of mercury, in the increasing diseases and decay of the teeth.

There are serious objections also to other articles of the metallic world; antimony, iron, and arsenic, are dangerous remedies in the hands of the ignorant, and mankind, perhaps, in the aggregate, would be benefitted by their expulsion from medical practice."

We heartily rejoice that physicians in England begin to open their eyes to the errors and dangers of their profession. They 'see men as trees, walking' Some of them at least, have discovered by woful experience that the present system of practice is daily sweeping thousands from the earth. The pillars of the faculty begin to tremble, and ere long the building will fall to the ground. This confession of Dr. Reece, the great advocate for regular practice, is like '*apples of gold in pictures of silver.*' We hope our readers will pay the greatest attention to his remarks. How shocking to *common sense*, that after all the boasted discoveries of four thousand years, this noted physician should declare that 'we know not whether we have most reason to hail the discovery of mercury as a blessing, or regard it as a curse, since the diseases it entails are as numerous as those which it cures.' Why then we would ask this learned physician, is it not abandoned? ought not any medicine manifestly a curse, to be laid aside? Would to heaven that the loss of the teeth were the only objection to its use! This is one of the smallest evils it produces; it induces a variety of the most serious diseases, and very commonly death itself.* Again, this candid practitioner judiciously remarks, "there are serious objections also to other articles of the metallic world: antimony, iron, and arsenic, are dangerous remedies in the hands of the ignorant: and mankind, perhaps, in the aggregate, would be benefitted by their expulsion from medical practice." Is not this paradoxical, that physicians persist in giving medicine that they themselves acknowledge to be pernicious? How inconsistent! How unphilosophical! This is altogether inexplicable. Who dare trust their lives in the hands of those who assert that they give 'dangerous remedies;' especially when it is stated by the same writer, that poor must be the resources of that physician's mind,

* The pernicious effects of mercury will be shown in a future number of this work.

and very narrow his knowledge of medical botany, who could not from the vegetable kingdom alone, cure most of the diseases of the human frame. When will mankind begin to examine into the present mode of treating the 'sick'? Some of the most respectable merchants in Boston, are so disgusted with the mischief and deplorable consequences resulting from the practice of medicine, that they have formed themselves into an association, and agreed to discountenance minerals of all descriptions, and to use only the productions of our own country. A gentleman, not long since, observed that he was confident that from the number of deaths he had known occasioned by surgical operations, and the administration of deleterious medicine, more persons had been killed by physicians and surgeons, than now lived upon the habitable globe. It is sincerely hoped, that the Lord, in mercy to mankind, will hasten the time when the present practice of physic and surgery will be completely overthrown, and another raised upon the ruins thereof. Indeed a radical reformation is desirable, if no other benefit should accrue from it than to prevent the destruction, misery, and deaths it occasions. Minerals are valuable. Iron is well calculated for stoves and plough-shares. Quicksilver is admirably calculated for coating looking-glasses, &c. &c. Antimony, oil of vitriol and arsenic, are articles of the utmost importance and utility to the manufacturer, but were never designed to be given for medicine.

EXPOSURE OF FALSEHOOD.

To those who have become acquainted with the directions given by Dr. Thomson to cure disease, and the means made use of for that purpose, by him and all who practice upon his plan, there need be very little said to convince them of the falsity of the various reports that the faculty are in the habit of publishing; in which they attempt to make the people believe that those patients who have died after having been attended by the "Thomsonian disciples," (as they please to call all who practice agreeable to our system) are destroyed by the practice. If it were true that one out

of several hundred should happen to die, of the sick attended in our way, what is the great wonder? It would be the grossest folly to assert, that any system of medical practice has been discovered, or ever will be, that will cure all disease. The most that has ever been pretended by Dr. Thomson or his friends, is, that his plan is perfectly safe, and better calculated to remove all causes of disease, and restore the patient to health, than the fashionable mode of the present day.

That our mode of practice is safe, and that the medicine made use of is composed of vegetable simples, and can do no possible harm to the patient, is a fact as well known to all who have a knowledge of it, as that there is such a system of practice. To prove this, as well as the extraordinary success which has attended it in curing all kinds of disease, we need no other evidence than that the faculty, or their followers, have not been able to find more than two or three cases of deaths to publish in a year suitable for their purpose, out of the thousands that are annually attended agreeably to the Thomsonian system of practice. And they have not been at all backward in seizing upon every case which afforded them an opportunity, by misrepresentation or ridicule, to prejudice the public against the system, and all those who use it; and they have found ready access to the press for their purpose.

The truth is, it has not been for want of success in curing disease, but the actual success that has attended the practice, which has caused the enmity and opposition of many of the doctors. To see those patients that have constantly grown worse under their treatment, and whom they have given up as past relief from medicine, cured in a short time by such simple means, and by those they are in the habit of calling ignorant quacks, because they have not been to college, wounds their pride; besides it interferes with their interest, having a tendency to lessen the people's

belief in their infallibility. These remarks do not apply to all the medical faculty; but to the younger class, who depend upon their diploma and outward show, for their success in gaining practice and popularity among the people. Many of the older and more experienced physicians, who are worthy of their calling, and who depend on their natural talents and experience for honours and usefulness, despise as much as we do, the mean and pitiful attempts that have been made by some of the faculty, to destroy a man, because by his useful discoveries in curing disease, and honest endeavours to benefit his fellow creatures, has exposed their ignorance and wounded their pride.

The main object will be, in pursuing our labours, to be useful by publishing whatever may tend to give a correct knowledge of the practice, and those means best calculated to cure disease, without engaging more than we can help in any controversial dispute; but whenever falshood is resorted to, and published to injure the cause we have espoused, we shall notice it in no other way than by publishing a statement of the facts, as far as they can be ascertained. The following statement is copied from an Albany paper, in which it was published as an advertisement. It is in answer to and completely refutes one of the most malicious and ridiculous accounts of a man dying under the treatment of what they call a steam-doctor, that we have seen.

To the Public.—Having seen in a paper printed at Syracuse, N. Y. a very erroneous statement relative to the death of Benjamin M. Mitchel, my brother-in-law, who died in Salina, in July 1826, I have thought proper to state the following facts: My brother had become extremely ill before he would consent to have any assistance, and in my opinion was beyond the effectual reach of medicine, when he voluntarily sent for Dr. Thomson, of Geddes, who immediately attended with his medicine, which gave him temporary re-

lief, which was acknowledged by himself; but nature being evidently far exhausted, the disease continued its progress, which terminated his life in four days. But no blame was attached to Dr. Thomson by him, nor any of his relations. I did then believe, and my opinion is still the same, that if Dr. Thomson had attended him in season, he might have survived, and still enjoyed good health. I have uniformly made use of Dr. Thomson's patent domestic medicine, since the death of my brother-in-law, and have always found it to be very beneficial in removing disease. I can therefore cheerfully recommend it to the public as being far superior to any other with which I have ever been acquainted.

THOMAS MITCHELL.

I being a brother-in law to the deceased, who died at my house, concur in the above statement.

JOHN WEBB.

From the BOSTON COURIER of May 26, 1827.

I observed in the Courier a paragraph to this effect; for I have not the paper before me.

THOMSONIAN PRACTICE. A person was snatched from the jaws of death, by some regular doctor, who had inhaled from a *Thomsonian Quack* the vapor of sulphur, for a pulmonic complaint.

Now it is an established fact, that Thomson abjures all *chemical* remedies, which is one of the faults of his system, and relies wholly on the medicinal virtues of the *vegetable* kingdom. Tell no more than truth of Thomson's practice, and his name will go down to posterity with honor. The thing most to be lamented is the circumstance of his being compelled to remunerate himself by a patent: for it puts the practice into the hands of ignorance and presumption. Had Samuel Thomson been a Frenchman, the King of France would have given him, according to custom, an ample pension for discoveries. In this country, is an able, judicious and laborious medical man to reap nothing,

but *abuse* for enriching the materia medica, with some of the most valuable articles that Nature has produced for the benefit of suffering humanity?

BOERHAAVE.

The writer of the above article is entitled to the thanks of Dr. Thomson and his friends, for coming forward in vindication of truth and justice. The story he alludes to was deemed too ridiculous to need any notice; for it is well known to all who have any knowledge on the subject, that Thomson never uses, or suffers to be used, sulphur or its vapour, in any manner or form whatever.* That he "abjures all chemical remedies," is not exactly correct, for some of his compounds may be called chemical preparations. It is true he condemns the use of all mineral substances being used as medicine; and maintains the ground that if an article is in its nature poisonous and detrimental to health, going through a chemical process cannot make it safe or useful in curing disease. Whether he is correct or not, or is a fault in his system, must be left for experience to decide. We believe, however, that among all candid men, if they would divest themselves of prejudice, there would be no doubt.

There are few men who have more knowledge of what may be called natural chemistry, than Dr. Thomson; for he has made it his study for many years, and there is scarce a vegetable in our country, that he has not tried its medicinal virtues, by every chemical process known. The result of his inquiry has been to come to certain conclusions in regard to the best mode in which vegetable medicine can be administered to cure disease; and his opinions on the subject are the

* It is a well known fact, that the *regular quacks* have recommended in the strongest terms, the use of the sulphur bath for pulmonic and other complaints; and it is also well known, that many very serious if not fatal consequences have happened by their use. If a patient should happen to die in consequence of using it, when recommended by a regular doctor, would it be murder or justifiable homicide?

best authority that can be adduced, for his knowledge is derived from actual experience. 1st, That all preparations by distillation, or decoctions, are too volatile to have any durable effect. 2d, That nothing can be depended upon in its operations to remove disease, except it be given in substance. 3d, That there is no benefit derived by compounds, or a mixture of different articles, as one thing may counteract the other; and it also could not be ascertained which had the desired effect. This last is a late conclusion of his; and he recommends to give one thing at a time, and if it fails, then try another.

These views on the subject, being the results of experience, are of the greatest importance, and worthy the serious consideration of all classes of people, particularly the medical faculty, whose opinions of their correctness we should be pleased to have communicated. If they are right, justice requires that the discoverer should have credit for his ingenuity; and if erroneous, let them be refuted by fair argument, founded on facts derived from their own experimental knowledge.

ON BLEEDING.

This subject is too important to be lost sight of, and we shall endeavour to lay before our readers such information on the subject as to convince them of its inutilty and the many fatal consequences that arise from the practice of bleeding to cure disease. The best evidence we can adduce to prove the fact, is to give the opinions of eminent medical men, as expressed in the following extracts from their writings on the subject.

“Among the various means made use of to restore the sick to health, there is none so irrational and absurd as blood-letting. It is at present, considered almost as a universal remedy, and resorted to for the cure of the slightest indisposition; and, although daily slaying

its thousands, it still continues to be the main pillar of the profession. Indeed were bleeding and mercury to be altogether prohibited, physicians would find themselves in a sad dilemma; their hands would be completely tied. We are unable to determine precisely the commencement of this custom, but we find it to be very ancient. It appears to have been commensurate with the declension of the healing art in the earliest ages of the world. It was not however carried to such a fury, till after the discovery of the circulation of the blood by Harvey. It was at this period that the whole faculty began their mad career, in committing the most wanton violation to the laws of nature. Those who were so unfortunate as to fall victims to disease, were doomed to suffer the most extravagant effusion of blood. The poor sufferers were soon hurried to an untimely grave, *secundum artem*. The guillotine of France hardly surpassed this systematic murdering. In process of time practitioners began to witness the mischief they were committing, which, in some measure, damped their ardour in these bloody scenes. This check induced one physician to remark, that *the proportionate disuse of the lancet was one of the greatest improvements in modern medicine*. We find however, that blood-letting has been practised for many centuries almost with the same infatuation; and, lamentable for mankind, in the present day, it is regarded as the most powerful weapon to subdue disease. There are few maladies in which it is not recommended. In pleurisy, and all inflammatory complaints, an astonishing quantity of blood is drawn from the system. It is very common to take from five to seven pounds in twenty-four hours. One of the professors in the medical college of this city stated that he had frequently bled his patients to the amount of two hundred ounces in three days. Another professor declared that he had taken three hundred ounces in the short space of three days, and for proof of this fact; appealed to one of his students. The effect of

this practice we shall leave for people of common sense to determine. How much is it to be regretted that such an awful scourge of humanity should exist ! A little examination into the consequences of blood-letting, will prove that so far from being beneficial, it is productive of the most serious and fatal effects.

“Nature has endowed the animal frame with the power of preparing, from proper aliment, a certain quantity of blood. This vital fluid, subservient to nutrition, is, by the amazing structure of the heart and blood-vessels, circulated through the different parts of the system. A certain natural balance between what is taken in, and what passes off by the several outlets of the body, is, in a state of health, regularly preserved. When this balance, so essential to life, is, contrary to the laws of the animal constitution, interrupted, either a deviation from a sound state is immediately perceived, or health, from that moment, is rendered precarious. Blood-letting tends artificially to destroy that natural balance in the constitution. Nature, deprived of a quantity of the circulating fluid, being fitted with means for repairing the loss she has sustained, begins immediately to repair it. The secretions and excretions in general are diminished ; the appetite is increased ; and, for a short time, the process of nutrition is unusually quick.

“Thus, by the wisdom of Providence, nature soon restores to the constitution what art had taken from it. It very frequently happens, however, that in many habits, the loss of even small quantities of blood, induces such a debility as to prevent a reaction of the system, whereby the blood becomes thin and watery, dropsical and other diseases follow, and very commonly death itself. The consequences of having been once bled are rarely considerable. This single operation, however, is an imprudent violation of nature, and of common sense.

“But too often the practice has not rested here. For various are the incidents which favour the repetition of blood-letting. The patient, if addicted to an easy, indolent, luxurious way of life, may find himself, after the evacuation, sensible of some present ease. The system, being before too full of blood, enjoys a short respite from its usual oppression.—Or, after the bleeding, though it was improper, and tended rather to increase the disease, yet the hope of relief, or a change of weather, the benefit of exercise and country air, or some other alteration in an accustomed manner of living, may, by palliating or removing the complaint, prejudice the patient in favor of the lancet. The disorder, it may be, was of such a kind as really to admit of alleviation from the use of bleeding; but, nevertheless, the remedy unhappily proves of worse effect to the constitution than the disease itself would have done though entirely left to nature. Great numbers of people who have been relieved by bleeding, are apt to be partial to the means of their own recovery, and to become strenuous advocates for its use, even in cases by no means similar to their own.

“These, and a variety of other accidental causes, often persuade to repetitions of blood-letting. The consequences now become more serious. The constitution, though it did not suffer materially from one bleeding, yet far from being able to undergo with impunity, repeated operations of a similar kind, turns against itself those powers which were given for its preservation, and co-operates with the imprudent use of the lancet in promoting the accomplishment of its own destruction. For now the constitution not only repairs the losses of blood it sustains, but, if the common intervals of time be interposed, makes more blood than is naturally required for the purposes of health and life, it may be able to bear such repeated evacuations.”

Medical Reformer.

Mr. Barry, a respectable citizen, sometime in the course of last summer, applied to an apothecary for a dose of the cream of tartar, in place of which he received tartar emetic; he had no sooner taken a small portion of it, than he was thrown into the most violent puking and spasms. A physician was immediately sent for, who administered fifteen grains of white vitriol. Death soon followed. Query, which killed the man, the tartar emetic, or the white vitriol?

INTEMPERANCE.

This subject seems to engross much of the attention of a certain class of men, who are ever ready to take upon themselves the burden of regulating the affairs of society; more by precept, however, than by example. That the immoderate use of ardent spirit is one of the greatest evils in the community, is a truth that no one can dispute; but to suppress an evil so extensive as that of intemperance, requires something more than the meetings of individuals or societies, and passing resolutions disapproving of the practice of keeping spirit in their houses, or allowing it to be used at their meetings.

The faculty it seems have fallen in with the popular feelings on the subject, and have passed a set of resolutions at a late meeting of the medical society, in which they endeavour to enlighten the world with certain very wise opinions. Such as, that an excess in the use of ardent spirit is more detrimental to health, than a temperate use of cold water; and that they will endeavour to discountenance the use of spirit in the compounds they are in the habit of giving to their patients, as much as possible. This is very kind of them, when it is a well known fact, that a large proportion of those compounds kept by the apothecaries, and which they are in the daily habit of causing to be administered to the sick, are a thousand times more injurious to the constitution, than the use of ardent spirit. If they are

really sincere in the endeavour to lessen the miseries of mankind, we would seriously recommend to them to abolish altogether their whole system of what they call depletive remedies ; for we have good reason to believe that it makes more habitual drunkards than all the other causes put together, particularly among the females.

When the tone of the stomach is destroyed by the use of minerals and other poisonous substances, the patient will remain for a long time in a languid state, both in body and mind. In this situation there is a natural craving for stimulants to overpower the cold and raise the power of vital heat ; and ardent spirit is too often resorted to for that purpose ; but the effect lasts but a short time, and leaves them worse than before. The momentary relief, however, obtained by this, calls for a repetition of the dose, until a habit is acquired. This would not be the case if proper means were taken to raise the inward heat and restore the digestive powers, so that food would be the only stimulant needed to restore the health and strength. Dr. Thomson has cured several drunkards by his medicine ; and prevented a return of the craving for spirit, by inducing a practice of taking such stimulating medicine as were in harmony with nature, and would have the desired effect, without producing intoxication. It is the effect produced, and not the pleasure of swallowing ardent spirit, that causes drunkenness.

STEAM BATH.

The application of Steam to cure disease, we consider one of the most important improvements of modern times. This method, with the internal stimulants, as directed by Dr. Thomson, is perfectly safe in all cases, and is more effectual in removing obstructions and giving life and vigor to the circulation, than any means that has ever been used to restore health. The doctors have lately introduced it into their practice ; but

seem to have very little knowledge of the manner in which it ought to be used to remove chronic complaints, therefore do little or no good with it, except in slight attacks. One of the most celebrated among the regular faculty, lately confessed that he had produced on a patient by steam in twenty minutes, an effect that he had failed to accomplish, after trying all the other means he could devise, for more than a year.

This subject will be more fully treated upon in future numbers; in which we shall endeavour to give such explanations and directions for its use, as will tend to make the application of steam to restore health, more generally useful, by being better understood.

VEGETABLE MEDICINE.

A correct knowledge of such vegetables as are known to be useful in curing disease, is of the utmost importance to all classes of the people. This knowledge can be obtained in no other way than by collecting the experience of those who have tested their virtues by using them. The writers on botany have been much more curious than useful; a little knowledge, therefore, gained by actual experience, is worth more than all that has been written on the subject. We shall lose no opportunity of obtaining all the information on the subject we can, and publishing whatever shall be thought useful and proper to be laid before the public.

There are a great many articles to be found in the vegetable kingdom, which if their medical properties were known, would be effectual in removing all complaints in their first stages, and save much sickness and expense, occasioned by neglect, or the use of poisons and other unnatural remedies.

CAUTION.

We are requested by Dr. Thomson to caution the public against the impositions of certain persons, who are travelling the country, particularly the western

states, and defrauding the people of their money by selling family rights for which they have no authority from him. A man by the name of Rogers has published a book, which he pretends is an improvement on the Thomson system; but his pretended improvements are nothing more than the alteration of names, with the addition of certain deleterious articles and mixtures that would be dangerous to use. Another man by the name of Miles is aiding Rogers in disposing of his books, and has obtained large sums of money of several men, under the pretence of selling them the right to practice under Dr. Thomson's patent, who has never authorized any one to sell such rights. People would do well to ascertain the authority under which rights are sold before they pay their money for them.

To Patrons.—The publication of this number has been necessarily delayed for the purpose of giving time to receive returns from agents and those to whom the first number was sent, in order to fix upon the number of copies it would be proper to print. In future the numbers will be published more regular, in the last week of each month.

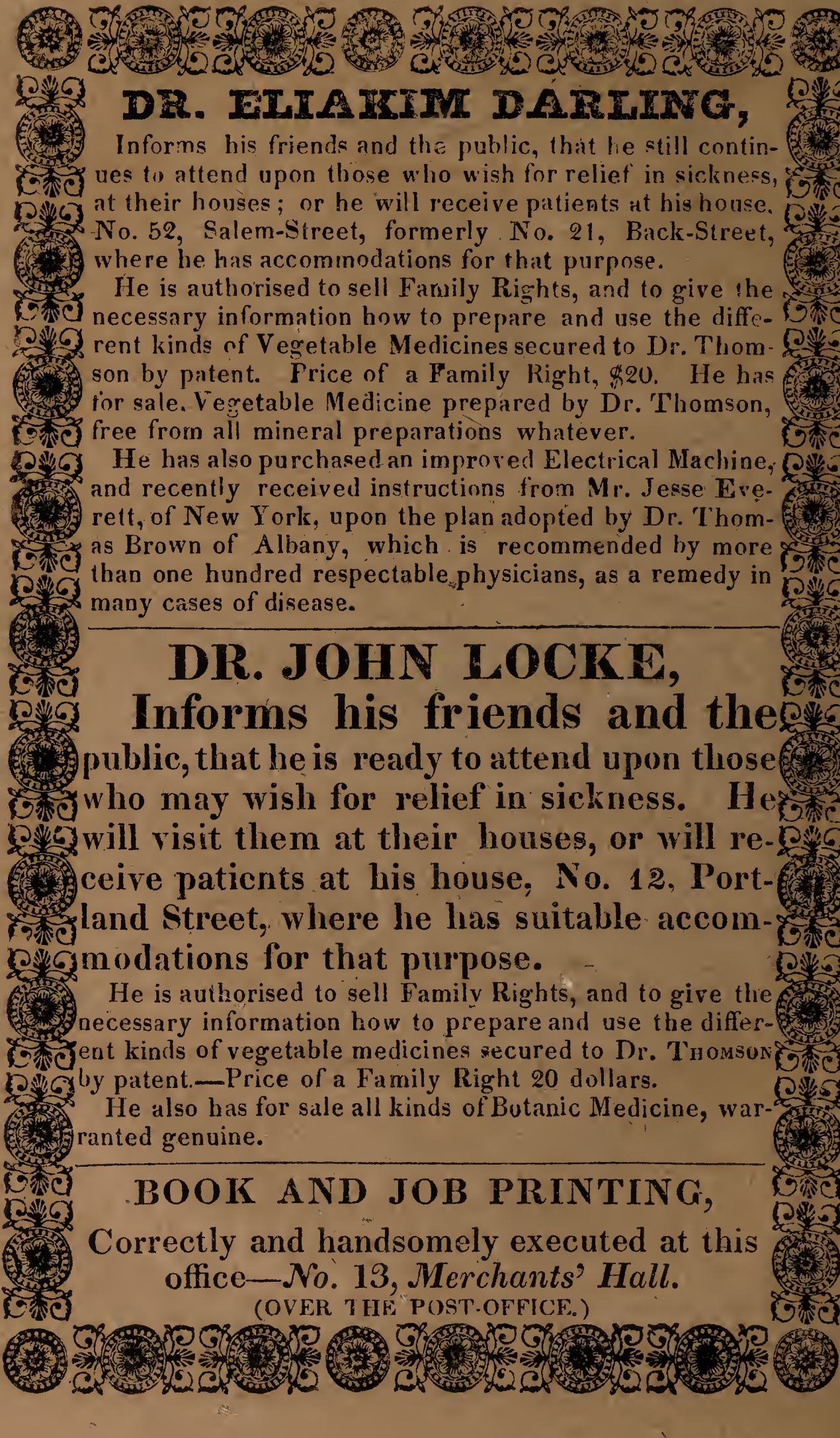
Those who are friendly to our undertaking, and who may wish to patronise the work by becoming subscribers, are requested to forward their names and place of residence, and the numbers will be sent to them by the most safe and economical conveyance.

NOTICE.

To whom it may concern, I hereby certify, that I have examined the first number of the MEDICAL ADVOCATE, published by E. G. House, and am well satisfied with its contents; believing that the distribution of the work among the people will extend the knowledge of my system of practice, and be productive of much public benefit; and I freely recommend it to the patronage of my friends and all who take an interest in promoting its success among the people.

SAMUEL THOMSON.

Boston, April 21, 1827.



DR. ELIAKIM DARLING,

Informs his friends and the public, that he still continues to attend upon those who wish for relief in sickness, at their houses; or he will receive patients at his house, No. 52, Salem-Street, formerly No. 21, Back-Street, where he has accommodations for that purpose.

He is authorised to sell Family Rights, and to give the necessary information how to prepare and use the different kinds of Vegetable Medicines secured to Dr. Thomson by patent. Price of a Family Right, \$20. He has for sale, Vegetable Medicine prepared by Dr. Thomson, free from all mineral preparations whatever.

He has also purchased an improved Electrical Machine, and recently received instructions from Mr. Jesse Everett, of New York, upon the plan adopted by Dr. Thomas Brown of Albany, which is recommended by more than one hundred respectable physicians, as a remedy in many cases of disease.

DR. JOHN LOCKE,

Informs his friends and the public, that he is ready to attend upon those who may wish for relief in sickness. He will visit them at their houses, or will receive patients at his house, No. 12, Portland Street, where he has suitable accommodations for that purpose.

He is authorised to sell Family Rights, and to give the necessary information how to prepare and use the different kinds of vegetable medicines secured to Dr. THOMSON by patent.—Price of a Family Right 20 dollars.

He also has for sale all kinds of Botanic Medicine, warranted genuine.

BOOK AND JOB PRINTING,

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